5th Grade- Becoming a Country- U.S. Government

Background

This unit is organized in Backward Design with five essential questions.  The first and last question are meant to be answered in a simple discussion.  The first question is to hook the students’ interest and the last question is to connect the topic of study to their lives. The three middle questions are the big ideas of what the core covers.

This cover page is a summary of the unit.  If students can answer these essential questions with details through a variety of assessments, they will remember the big ideas long past the end of the unit.  The strategies and activities included are meant to teach students historian and literacy skills.  Good historians, like good readers, observe, infer, analyze primary sources, ask good questions, use background knowledge, make connections, compare and contrast, summarize, understand cause/effect, and use multiple perspectives in their study of history.

One important historian skill is to analyze primary source documents.  These are original sources such as letters, diaries, original maps, sound and video clips taken at the time of an event, photographs, etc.  Analyzing these documents gives students a chance to use historian skills and learn about life at the time of the document through the original source.

For primary source documents and activity sets already compiled with questions, visit [Docs Teach](http://docsteach.org/).  There is also an iPad app called Docs Teach that has ready to use primary sources organized by year and topic.  Another great tool for getting started is found at the [National Archives Website](http://www.archives.gov/education/research/). Whenever a document is presented, students need time to analyze it and make inferences about it.  This can be done through discussion or by completing a document analysis sheet.  These can be found at [Education Tool Box](http://www.archives.gov/nae/education/tool-box.html) on the National Archives site (on the right hand side).  A general document analysis can be found at [5th History- Primary Sources](http://fifthhistory.wikispaces.com/Primary+Sources), called a Document Analysis Disco.

The strategies described can be used to teach and assess the students.  An assessment might be as simple as writing a paragraph on an exit card, or listing the important people in an event.  Through these authentic assessments, students will be better able to discuss history than simply arbitrarily choosing an answer on a multiple choice test.

For more resources on this unit, visit [JHAT Standard 3 Primary Resources](http://jhatjr.wikispaces.com/Standard+3+Archives)

Cover Page- Overview

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| Essential Questions | Assessments | Explanation and Resources |
| How can fifth graders help set up rules for their classroom? | I can engage effectively in a discussion about rules in the classroom. | Have a class discussion about why rules are important and what would happen in the classroom without rules. Compare it to the colonies and their government. Talk with the students about what would happen if a country had no government.  If desired, review the class rules, then break the students into groups (tables works great if they are seated that way) and have them make rules for their table/group. This helps them to see how difficult it is for everyone to agree on the same rules. |
| How did the Constitution begin? | I can make a cartoon describing how the Constitution began, the goals from the Preamble and the importance of the Bill of Rights. | After learning about the Constitution and Bill of Rights, give students a comic outline, paper for a plan, and colors (colored pencils work best for detail). Read some comics together as a class and make a list of things a comic has (pictures, text the characters say or think, can be black and white or colored, etc.)  Tell them to make a comic with two characters who describe how the Constitution began, the goals from the Preamble and the importance of the Bill of Rights. Have them make a plan on their paper before transferring it to the comic paper.  This can also be done online at [Comic Creator](http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/games-tools/comic-creator-a-30237.html) from readwritethink or by using the application Comic Life. |
| What does the new government look like? | I can make a mini poster about our government showing the three branches of government, checks and balances, and a flowchart of how a law is passed. | After studying the branches of government and how a law is passed, give students a blank paper and markers (crayons and colored pencils work as well). Tell them that they need to make their own mini poster that teaches about all three branches of government, how they check and balance each other, and how a law is passed. This is a lot of information to put on one page, so you may want to give them a 9 x 18 piece of construction paper. |
| How has the Constitution been amended and interpreted over time? | I can complete a graphic organizer that explains how the rights of selected groups have changed over time and how the Constitution shows those changes. | The rights of selected groups that have changed over time are reflected in the amendments to the Constitution following the Bill of Rights (amendments 11-27). Have students create a 2 column chart (T chart works fine) in which they list the amendment on the left and the people it affected on the right.  For example, on the left is amendment 13 and the right says- slavery was outlawed. African Americans were considered free people. |
| What influence does the Constitution have today? | I can write a report about a patriotic tradition and find a current event that shows the impact of the Constitution on my life today. | Have students choose a patriotic tradition (Pledge of Allegiance, flag etiquette, voting) and research it. Have them write a report about its history and why this tradition is important.  Next, have students bring a current event from home (or take time in the computer lab to look through news websites). It needs to be something that shows one or more rights that the Constitution gives us. For example, a news article where someone used freedom of religion would be supported from the 1st Amendment. Have the students share their articles and tell how their event can happen today because of the Constitution. |

Strategies and Assessments in Detail

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| **Essential Question #2** | How did the Constitution begin? |
| **Assessment** | I can make a cartoon describing how the Constitution began, the goals from the Preamble and the importance of the Bill of Rights. |

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| SS Core | I can statement | Strategies | Materials Needed | Time Needed | Summary/Assessment |
| III, 1a Recognize ideas from documents used to develop the Constitution | I can participate in a read aloud play to practice fluency and discuss why the colonists needed to unite as a country. | Read Aloud Play | Unite or Die play  Unite or Die book – to view at Amazon [click here](http://www.amazon.com/Unite-Die-Thirteen-States-Became/dp/158089190X)  Unite or Die Book Trailer Movie Clip [click here](http://www.jacquelinejules.com/unite2.htm)  Unite or Die Reader’s Theater [click here](http://www.jacquelinejules.com/UniteorDieReadersTheaterRev909.pdf?s=Jacqueline+Jules) | 45-60 min. | Have a quick 3-5 minute discussion about what the country was like in the 1780s after the Revolutionary War under the Articles of Confederation. Introduce the idea that there were problems and the delegates wanted to meet at a convention to try and “fix” the Articles. Some of them had different ideas and had agreed to come up with a new form of government.  Show the students the book trailer. Read the book with the class. If you don’t have a copy of the book, the book trailer and the play are fine.  Print out copies of the Reader’s Theater and practice it together as a class. Discuss why |
| I can analyze primary source documents and take notes on a graphic organizer. | Primary Source Analysis | Documents that led to Constitution Graphic Organizer and primary source texts (found in one document)  Brainpop movie Iroquois Confederacy [click here](http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/culture/iroquoisconfederacy/)(optional)  Teacher background on Iroquois Confederacy [click here](http://nativeamericans.mrdonn.org/northeast/iroquois/leagueofnations.html) | 60-90 min. | NOTE: This lesson is placed here because it answers the essential question, but students will not be able to complete this activity until they have studied the Constitution in depth. It would be best to do this after they have done the Gallery Walk with the 3 branches of government.  This activity can be done as a whole class or in small groups, depending on your students background knowledge, ability to do higher level thinking tasks, and small group work. This does stretch the students, which is good for them.  Break up the class into 5 groups and give them each one of the documents to study and a graphic organizer for each student. Give them about 7 minutes to study the document and take notes. Have them read the highlighted parts first, then read the rest if there is time. Switch documents and have them look at each set of documents (5 rotations at 7 min. each should take about 35-40 min.)  Come back together as a class and discuss each document together, looking for the ideas that the Founding Fathers used to create the Constitution.  For an additional activity to compare the U.S. Constitution to the Iroquois Constitution use this webquest [click here](http://questgarden.com/53/52/5/070718094708/index.htm) |
| III, 1b Analyze the goals outlined in the Preamble | I can view a media presentation and determine the main goals of the Preamble to be able to rewrite it in my own words. | In My Own Words | Preamble Powerpoint [click here](http://mrkash.com/activities/activities.html#constitution)  For a PDF version [click here](http://mrkash.com/activities/preamble.pdf)  Powerpoint Version 2 [click here](http://www.monet.k12.ca.us/curriculum/librarylessons/correlations/History%20and%20Social%20Studies%20Standards/Passport%20PowerPoint%20Presentations/Preamble%20Powerpoint.ppt)  Schoolhouse Rock video clip [click here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHp7sMqPL0g)  We the Kids Book (optional)  Teacher info [click here](http://kids.laws.com/preamble-of-the-constitution)  Class Preamble Paper (optional) [click here](http://www.abcteach.com/free/w/writingprompt_constitution_wethestudents.pdf) | 45-60 min. | Show the Schoolhouse Rock video clip to the class to introduce the Constitution and the Preamble.  NOTE: To download the first Powerpoint, click on the link and go down the page halfway. Find the one titled “Preamble Vocabulary Powerpoint” and download it.  This activity can be done in a variety of ways. First, read the preamble from the Powerpoint, PDF copy or textbook. Next, use the powerpoint (either one) to go through the Preamble phrase by phrase. Have students write down 1-2 notes per slide about the meaning of words of phrases.  If you have a copy of the book, *We the Kids*, this is a great time to read it and talk about how the pictures match the Preamble.  Next, have them rewrite the Preamble in their own words using their notes.  If desired, print out a copy of the Class Preamble Paper. Talk with the class about your general class goals and write a preamble together.  For those who teach Dual Immersion or need copy of the Preamble and Constitution in Spanish [click here](http://www.usconstitution.net/const_sp.html) |
| III, 2a Explain the significance of the Bill of Rights | I can watch a movie clip, listen to a song, and read a text about the Bill of Rights to complete a stop and write about the Bill of Rights. |  | Bill of Rights Song  [Bill of (Your) Rights](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7RxrQJrdh4)  To purchase this song [click here](http://www.educationalrap.com/song/bill-of-your-rights/)  Movie clip [Bill of Rights Movie](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYEfLm5dLMQ)  Stop and Write  [Bill of Rights Elementary Version](http://www.utb.edu/vpaa/cce/Documents/Celebrate%20Freedom%20Week/BORights%20Chart%20Elem.pdf) |  | Hand out the Stop and Write paper. Have students complete the first sentence with something they already know about the Bill of Rights or the Constitution if they know nothing about the Bill of Rights.  As they watch the movie clip, listen to the song, and read the Bill of Rights Elementary Version, have them add new things they have learned. |
| I can participate in a four corners plus debate about the Bill of Right and write a paragraph about the importance of the Bill of Rights. | Four Corners Plus | Bill of Rights Signs | 30-45 min. | Print off the 10 Bill of Rights Signs or make your own (simply list the amendment number and what it is about). Hang up 4-5 of them in different places in the classroom. Ask the students to stand by the one that is the most important to them , then talk with the group members about why they are there.  Randomly call on a person from the group to share with the rest of the class. After each group shares, give students time to change groups if their opinion was swayed by the class members' comments.  After having 2-3 groups share, switch out a few of the amendment signs so there are still 4-5 signs up but with some different amendments. Repeat the same process of having students talk in groups and sharing why they think a particular amendment is important.  The important part of the activity is that there is not a right answer. Students are sharing their opinions and supporting them with reasons from their studies. |

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| **Essential Question #3** | What does the new government look like? |
| **Assessment** | I can make a mini poster about our government showing the three branches of government, checks and balances, and a flowchart of how a law is passed. |

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| SS Core | I can statement | Strategies | Materials Needed | Time Needed | Summary/Assessment |
| III, 1c  Distinguish between the role of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches of the government.  III, 1e  Describe the concept of checks and balances. | I can locate answers to questions about the branches of government and the checks and balances using multiple sources and create a poster about a specific branch of government. | Research | Reading on the 3 branches of government and how they balance each other. Here are a couple of good resources:  [Ben's Guide to Government](http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/government/branches.html)  [Congress for kids](http://www.congressforkids.net/Constitution_threebranches.htm)  [Fact Monster](http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0774837.html)  [Constitution Translated for Kids Book](http://www.amazon.com/Constitution-Translated-Kids-Cathy-Travis/dp/1933538015)  Poster, markers | 60-90 min. | This activity can be done all at once or over several days. The best way to start is to have the students do the reading over a period of time so they have time to really examine and get to know their branch of government. An excellent way to do this is to get the [Constitution Translated for Kids](http://www.amazon.com/Constitution-Translated-Kids-Cathy-Travis/dp/1933538015) book and have them read their assigned branch of government from the actual Constitution.  Break the class into 3 groups and assign them Judicial, Executive, or Legislative. Have a class discussion to introduce each of the 3 branches first and introduce the idea that they balance each other in power. Give them time to research. This could be done individually, as partners, or small groups. The goal is that students can summarize the duties of their branch of government and create a graphic that explains how their branch balances and checks the other branches.  After researching, have 3-4 students from the same branch of government make a poster together (there will be duplicate copies of each branch of government, which is good). It needs to include the duties for that branch and how they check and balance the other two branches. |
| I can participate in a gallery walk and take notes on the branches of government and how they check and balance each other. | Gallery Walk | Notebook/ Paper  Blank checks and balances chart [click here](http://www.cyberlearning-world.com/lessons/oct6usg.htm)  Student-made posters about the 3 branches of government |  | Have students draw 3 columns in their notebook (or take a paper and fold it with 3 long columns). Label each column with a branch of government. As students go through the gallery, they should take notes on the branches of government.  Also, give them a blank checks and balances chart in which they can write notes about how the branches balance each other.  Do a Gallery Walk where the posters are hung throughout the room and students travel to each poster in silence and take notes. This can be set up where students travel in assigned groups and have a set amount of time at each poster, or as a simple walk about where students go until they have visited each poster. |
| III, 1d  Explain the process of passing a law. | I can create a visual representation of how a bill is passed into law after reading a text, viewing video clips, and participating in a reader’s theater. | Visual Representation Flowchart  Reader’s Theater | [How a Bill Becomes a Law](http://kids.clerk.house.gov/grade-school/lesson.html?intID=17) text  [I'm Just a Bill video clip](http://www.schooltube.com/video/89a42a6866404f4baab7/Im-Just-a-Bill)  [House Mouse, Senate Mouse video clip](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7p-Kyll5-o) or read the book- To purchase the book [click here](http://www.amazon.com/House-Mouse-Senate-Peter-Barnes/dp/0963768840)  [How a Bill Becomes a Law Reader's Theater](http://geoalliance.asu.edu/azga/sites/default/files/LessonFiles/NiceWiens/FloodBill/NiceWiensFloodBillS.pdf) | 45-60 min. | Show the video clip and have students read the text about how a bill becomes a law. Next, have a few students perform the reader’s theater for the class.  Finally, read the book *House Mouse, Senate Mouse* (or show the You Tube reading of it).  Afterward, discuss the steps of how a bill becomes a law. Give students a blank paper and have them create a chart showing how a bill becomes a law.  If you have Brainpop at your school, they have a great video clip [click here](http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/usgovernmentandlaw/howabillbecomesalaw/). |

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| **Essential Question #4** | How has the Constitution been amended and interpreted over time? |
| **Assessment** | I can complete a graphic organizer that explains how the rights of selected groups have changed over time and how the Constitution shows those changes. |

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| SS Core | I can statement | Strategies | Materials Needed | Time Needed | Summary/Assessment |
| III, 2b  Identify how the rights of selected groups have changed and how the  Constitution reflects those changes (*e.g.* women, enslaved people). | I can participate in a list, group, and label with the amendments to the Constitution. | List, Group, Label | 5-7 sets of the Amendment Sort  Sticky Notes | 15-30 min. | Print out the 5-7 sets of Amendment Sort and cut apart on the lines. Break students up into groups and give them a set of the cards. This is good for 4-5 students because there are a lot of cards to read.  Within their groups, students need to read the amendments and sort them into groups. Give each group some sticky notes to write titles for their groups. The only rules are that there cannot be an “oddball” or “misc.” group, and they have to be sorted according to what they say (not alphabetically or something like that), and every amendment has to belong to a category.  After 10-15 minutes, have students stop sorting (even if they aren’t done since this can take a long time). Have them walk around and see how each group decided to sort their amendments.  Bring the class together and ask them what they learned about the 27 amendments. |
| I can create a class book about the amendments to the Constitution. | Class Book | Blank paper  1 copy of the Amendment Sort  Access to Internet or a printed copy of each amendment information found at [kids laws](http://kids.laws.com/preamble-of-the-constitution)  Markers, crayons, colored pencils | 30-45 min. | Assign each student one of the amendments. If you have more than 27 students, assign a few students to work as partners. If you have less than 27 students, assign a few ambitious students to do 2 amendments. Give students 15-20 minutes to read about their amendment and think about what pictures they could draw to represent it.  If the computer lab is not available, print a copy of the information for each amendment and have them read it in class.  Cut apart the amendment sort papers and give each student their assigned amendment and a blank paper. Instruct them to glue the amendment to the bottom of the paper, then title the paper with the Amendment number and the year it was passed.  Next, they need to draw pictures that represent the amendment. This is meant to be done in one day, so it is good to emphasize to the students that this stick figures are ok and give them a specific time limit (10-15 min is appropriate). A good way to do it is right before recess and those who aren’t finished can finish during recess time.  When all the pages are finished, bind them together as a class book. A simple way to do this is to hole punch the pages and put them in a folder with prongs. |
| I can complete a graphic organizer that explains how the rights of selected groups have changed over time and how the Constitution shows those changes. | Graphic Organizer | Constitution and Rights Graphic Organizer  Notes on the amendments or a copy of the following amendments: 13, 14, 15, 19, 24 from the [kids laws](http://kids.laws.com/preamble-of-the-constitution) site | 30-45 min. | Review the following amendments together as a class: 13, 14, 15, 19, and 24. The Kids Laws website is good to give the details of the amendment in kid-friendly language and background about why it was important.  After reading and discussing the amendments, give the students the Constitution and Rights graphic organizer and have them complete it.  This could also be done as a small group or independent activity where students are given the amendments and graphic organizer and have to read them to complete the chart.  The importance of this activity is making inferences from the text to complete the chart since the answers are not simply stated. |

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| **Essential Question #5** | What influence does the Constitution have today? |
| **Assessment** | I can write a report about a patriotic tradition and find a current event that shows the impact of the Constitution on my life today. |

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| SS Core | I can statement | Strategies | Materials Needed | Time Needed | Summary/Assessment |
| III, 2f  Discover the basis for the patriotic and citizenship traditions we have today (*i.e.* Pledge of Allegiance, flag etiquette, voting). | I can read about patriotic traditions and share them in a Give One, Get One activity. | Give One, Get One | Patriotic and Citizenship Traditions Notes Chart  Ben’s Guide to Government American Symbols [click here](http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/symbols/index.html)  Flag etiquette [click here](http://www.brownielocks.com/flagrules.html)  Voting History [click here](http://www.uen.org/general_learner/civics/elections/rights_history.shtml)  History of the Right to Vote- real stories [click here](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/history-right-vote)  Flag information [click here](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CDOC-105sdoc13/pdf/CDOC-105sdoc13.pdf) (optional) | 30-60 min. | Print out several articles or have students look them up in the computer lab. Ben’s Guide to Government has about 10-20 symbols that can be studied. Have students read 3-4 topics and keep notes on their chart.  Next, have students share in a Give One, Get One. In this activity, students stand up with their paper and pencil and find another student. Each student needs to share something he/she learned with the other student. Students write down the new information on their chart. They should continue until they have completed the chart with 3-4 facts in each section.  The chart has 3 blank sections at the end where you can add more topics or have the class choose the topics. For the activity to work well, students need to be researching the same topics. |
| III, 2c  Analyze the impact of the Constitution on their lives today (*e.g*. freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition). | I can find a current event that shows the impact of the Constitution on my life. | Current Event | Washington Post for kids [click here](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost)  KSL [click here](http://www.ksl.com)  BBC news [click here](http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/)  Student News Net [click here](https://www.studentnewsnet.com/)  Or any other favorite news website you may like | 30-45 min. | Brainstorm with the students ways in which the Constitution impacts their lives today. Write a list as a class. Examples might be stories in which the people used their freedom of religion or freedom of speech. It might be a bill that was passed that will directly affect them or their community.  Take students to the lab and have them look at the news websites listed looking for articles that show how the Constitution impacts us today.  This shouldn’t be too hard to find since many things that happen in the news are related to the Constitution in some way.  Students may also include international articles that show rights that our Constitution protects that may not be protected in other countries.  After 15 min. of research (or what you feel is enough for your class), have them print the article or write notes about it to share with the class.  Return to class and have each student share his/her article, describing what happened and how this article is an example of how the Constitution affects our lives.  Another option: If this sounds like it will take too much time, or the computer lab is not available do the following:   1. require students to bring an article from home (this is difficult if they don’t all have Internet access or get the newspaper) 2. talk to the local newspaper agency and they usually can give you a few copies of the newspaper for free 3. find some articles you like, print them off and have students read them in class in small groups or individually. |